THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No Sir,

(b) In view of availability of alternative services and operational and resource constraints, there is no proposal at present to introduce additional services on Rishikesh-Delhi/Lucknow sector.

Gauge Conversion in Tamil Nadu

1807. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the status of gauge conversion in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether it is a fact that the projects are going behind schedule;

(c) if so, what steps are being taken to improve the conversion projects;

(d) whether it is a fact that Tamil Nadu is being given a step-motherly treatment for funding these conversion projects; and

(e) what is the actual length of conversion which have been completed, as in December, 1999?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) In Tamil Nadu, gauge conversion of Dindigul-Tuticorin, Chennai-Tambaram-Trichy, Trichy-Thanjavur, Trichy-Dindigul, Arakkonam-Chengalpattu and Salem- Yashwantpur sections have been completed and gauge conversion work has been taken up on Katpadi-Villupuram, Villupuram-Pondicherry, Thanjavur-Nagore- Karaikal, Trichy-Manmadurai, Madurai-Rameshwaram, Quilon-Virudhungar-Tenkasi-Tirunelvelli-Tiruchendur. Further gauge conver- sion of Villupuram-Thaitjavur and Salem-Vriddhachalam-Cuddalore have been included in the Budget and will be taken up after obtaining necessary clearnances, action for which has been initiated.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No, Sir. In fact, in 1999-2000, Rs. 149.50 cr. out of a total of Rs. 735 cr. viz. 20% of the total gauge conversion budget for Indian Railways has been allotted to gauge conversion projects in Tamil Nadu.

(e) Gauge conversion of 885 km in Tamil Nadu have been completed out of a total gauge conversion of 8437 km in the whole country since 1992-93, when Project Unigauge was launched.

Higher Expenditure on Operating Trains

† 1808. DR. D. MASTHAN:
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that expenditure incurred on the operation of the trains is more in comparison to that being incurred at international level;

(b) if so, the average trains operation expenditure in the country and at international level; and

(c) the reasons for the higher operation expenditure in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) Average train operating expenditure in terms of average cost of haulage of a coaching train and a goods train, per train kilometre, on Indian Railways is as follows:

(Figures in Rs.)

Year	Coaching Train	Goods Train
1996-97	250.26	473.26
1997-98	311.71	573.55
1998-99	321.48	630.60

Similar information concerning other railways is not available. As such, no comments can be offered on relative cost performance.

Reorganisation of RUCCS

1809. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that, of late, there are no closer ties between the Railways and the Rail users in the country and the facilities for the Rail users have been curtailed substantially;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

†Original Notice of the question was received in Hindi.